

Creating food sustainability by planting fruit trees this Mandela Day

A collection of tiny community-based organisations and non-profit companies are working together to plant, photograph, tag and map 200 fruit trees across Gauteng this Mandela Day, 18 July - and they hope to inspire others to do the same.



Supplied image: Members of the community at a fruit tree planting event in Lawley, December 2022

Photo credit: Michelle Sohn

The brainchild of The Ground Movers, and supported by 10 Million Makers, Refilwe Pieterse Foundation, Envirocare, iZindaba Zokudla and Enviro Research Hub, the project aims to create food sustainability in local communities.

Trees have been sent to hubs in Alexandra, the inner city, Soweto, Thembisa and Vosloorus to share with trusted local organisations, including old age homes, schools and NPCs.

“Tree planting aligns with the values and principles of Mandela Day and it aims to create food sustainability in local communities. The Ground Movers are doing agriculture and are passionate about our environment. We want to help others to do the same. We believe in growing our future, and we’d like to invite everyone to join us so we can grow it together,” says Vuyo Tishane from The Ground Movers, Soweto.

“For us, this is about more than just planting a tree, it is about growing stronger, resilient communities. The Ground Movers approached us about the project, and within a matter of days, using our network of micro-organisations, we matched 200 trees to 200 people who will plant and nurture them - and share the benefits with the community,” says Michele Sohn from 10 Million Makers.

For the Refilwe Pieterse Foundation, based in Alexandra, getting involved was an easy choice. “We ignite the fire of purpose through applied education, and what better purpose to ignite than the desire and ability to grow a tree, save the climate and feed a family,” says founder Refilwe Pieterse.

Adds Professor Naudé Malan, UJ, Convener of urban farming action research project iZindaba Zokudla, "Townships like Soweto have less than 7% tree cover, compared to over 50% in some suburbs in Johannesburg. Trees bring life, shade, cool the atmosphere and bring value to properties, landscapes and local areas. Trees bring justice and an appreciation of nature. Long live our trees!"

EnviroCare Thembisa cleans up rivers, and plants food gardens to solve hunger. Says founder Samuel Mashimbi, “We urge you all to join us as we plant a fruit tree and change the future.”

Adds Siyabonga Ndlangamandla, a director at Lorrentzville-based Enviro Research Hub: “We like to contribute our small steps to create a better tomorrow for our planet and future generations. Plant a tree for future generations to eat its fruit and enjoy its shade.”

Organisations who would like to join in and host their own tree planting, can email wildgreen@10millionmakers.africa

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